

VZCZCXYZ0046  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNY #0330 1681458  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 161458Z JUN 08  
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6855

UNCLAS OSLO 000330

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EWWT](#) [EAID](#) [ECIN](#) [ECON](#) [EFIS](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#)

PHSA, PINS, PREL, SENV, SNAR, ASEC, SMIG, NO

SUBJECT: IF NOTHING'S FISHY, NORWEGIANS MIGHT JOIN THE  
GLOBAL MARITIME PARTNERSHIP

REF: SECSTATE 50488

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Representatives from the Norwegian Ministry of Trade gave a cautious though positive reception to the idea of membership in the Global Maritime Partnership (GMP).

A further response will be forthcoming from the GON after a July 1 interagency meeting. Rather than an unqualified "yes," the initial Norwegian response was tempered by a characteristic desire to not disempower already-existing formal multilateral institutions. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Poloff met with Leif Asbjorn Nygaard, Director General of the Maritime Division of the Ministry of Trade and Economy, and his Senior Advisor, Charlotte Strom. In an hour-long preliminary discussion of the GMP, Nygaard noncommittally expressed interest.

#### The Importance of Appearances

¶3. (SBU) Nygaard shared what he perceived to be our concern about maritime security. He said he supported US initiatives in this regard, and emphasized that he realized there was a threat "to all NATO countries": a threat to which GMP may be one appropriate response. Nygaard differentiated between substantive barriers to bad actors, and "visible" barriers, into which he grouped political collective action such as the GMP. As for whether Norway would join the GMP, Nygaard said that assuming the MFA, after analysis, concluded that the GMP would do no harm, he could not foresee why Norway would not join. Poloff throughout the discussion emphasized that the GMP was not just a security concept, but Nygaard repeatedly returned to the maritime security theme.

#### Critical Mass is Crucial

¶4. (SBU) Speaking "frankly," Nygaard said that in order to join the GMP, Norway would have to be convinced that the idea had a critical mass of acceptance. He warned Poloff that the GON would be cautious to avoid a process where international cooperation is taken out of formal institutions, such as the IMO.

#### Norway's Biggest Concerns

¶5. (SBU) When asked specifically about possible areas of cooperation or at least concern for Norwegian shipping that the GMP could potentially address, Nygaard gave a list that seemed colored by his position in the Trade and Economy Ministry. The list comprised: (1) tax policy, (2) problems with recruiting and crewing, (3) environmental issues, especially global warming. In addition, Nygaard mentioned several bilateral issues with the US, including rules about nationality on US LNG ships, which he characterized as protectionist, and the difficulty Norwegian seamen have disembarking in the US. Nygaard expressed hope that the GMP might possibly provide a "forum" in which to discuss those issues as well.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: The US will have to wait until a formal decision from the Norwegian interagency process to fully know the extent of the GON's interest in GMP membership. Poloff's meeting with the Ministry of Trade was characterized by caution, although this might have been due to our interlocutor's uncertainty about how the GMP would serve Norway's interests better than existing institutions. Norway's fear of weakening formal multilateral institutions is thoroughly characteristic and often makes for a barrier to any international agreement that has a whiff of bilaterality. That said, none of the GMP principles articulated in reftel had the Norwegians turning up their noses at something fishy.

End comment.

WHITNEY